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Google

Google LLC (/ˈɡuːɡəl/ , *GOO-gəl*) is an American multinational corporation and technology company focusing on online advertising, search engine technology, cloud computing, computer software, quantum computing, e-commerce, consumer electronics, and artificial intelligence (AI).[9] It has been referred to as "the most powerful company in the world" by the BBC[10] and is one of the world's most valuable brands due to its market dominance, data collection, and technological advantages in the field of AI.[11][12][13] Alongside Amazon, Apple, Meta, and Microsoft, Google's parent company, Alphabet Inc. is one of the five Big Tech companies.

Google was founded on September 4, 1998, by American computer scientists Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were PhD students at Stanford University in California. Together, they own about 14% of its publicly listed shares and control 56% of its stockholder voting power through super-voting stock. The company went public via an initial public offering (IPO) in 2004. In 2015, Google was reorganized as a wholly owned subsidiary of Alphabet Inc. Google is Alphabet's largest subsidiary and is a holding company for Alphabet's internet properties and interests. Sundar Pichai was appointed CEO of Google on October 24, 2015, replacing Larry Page, who became the CEO of Alphabet. On December 3, 2019, Pichai also became the CEO of Alphabet.[14]

The company has since rapidly grown to offer a multitude of products and services beyond Google Search, many of which hold dominant market positions. These products address a wide range of use cases, including email (Gmail), navigation and mapping (Waze, Maps, and Earth), cloud computing (Cloud), web navigation (Chrome), video sharing (YouTube), productivity (Workspace), operating systems (Android), cloud storage (Drive), language translation (Translate), photo storage (Photos), videotelephony (Meet), smart home (Nest),

Google LLC

The Google logo used since 2015

Google's headquarters, the Googleplex

Formerly	Google Inc. (1998–2017)
Company type	Subsidiary
Traded as	Nasdaq: GOOGL Nasdaq: GOOG
Industry	Internet Cloud computing Computer software Computer hardware Artificial intelligence Advertising
Founded	September 4, 1998[a] in Menlo Park, California, United States
Founders	Larry Page Sergey Brin
Headquarters	Googleplex, Mountain View, California, U.S.
Area served	Worldwide
Key people	Sundar Pichai (CEO)

smartphones (Pixel), wearable technology (Pixel Watch and Fitbit), music streaming (YouTube Music), video on demand (YouTube TV), AI (Google Assistant and Gemini), machine learning APIs (TensorFlow), AI chips (TPU), and more. Discontinued Google products include gaming (Stadia),[15] Glass, Google+, Reader, Play Music, Nexus, Hangouts, and Inbox by Gmail.[16][17] Google's other ventures outside of internet services and consumer electronics include quantum computing (Sycamore), self-driving cars (Waymo, formerly the Google Self-Driving Car Project), smart cities (Sidewalk Labs), and transformer models (Google DeepMind).[18]

Google Search and YouTube are the two most-visited websites worldwide, followed by Facebook and Twitter (now known as X). Google is also the largest search engine, mapping and navigation application, email provider, office suite, online video platform, photo, and cloud storage provider, mobile operating system, web browser, machine learning framework, and AI virtual assistant provider in the world as measured by market share.[19] On the list of most valuable brands, Google is ranked second by *Forbes* as of January 2022[20] and fourth by Interbrand as of February 2022.[21]

The company has received significant criticism involving issues such as privacy concerns, tax avoidance, censorship, search neutrality, antitrust, and abuse of its monopoly position. On August 5, 2024, D.C. Circuit Court Judge Amit P. Mehta ruled that Google held an illegal monopoly over Internet search.[22]

	Ruth Porat (President and CIO) Anat Ashkenazi (CFO) Thomas Kurian (CEO of Google Cloud)
Products	Android Nest Pixel Search Workspace Fitbit Waze YouTube Gemini Full list
Number of employees	182,502 (2023)
Parent	Alphabet Inc.
Subsidiaries	Adscape Cameyo Charleston Road Registry DeepMind Endoxon FeedBurner ImageAmerica Kaltix Nest Labs reCAPTCHA YouTube ZipDash
ASN	15169 (https://bgp.tools/as/15169)
Website	google.com (https://google.com/)
Footnotes / references [5][6][7][8]	

History

Early years

Google began in January 1996 as a research project by Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were both PhD students at Stanford University in California.[23][24][25] The project initially involved an unofficial "third founder", Scott Hassan, the original lead programmer who wrote much of the code for the original Google Search engine, but he left before Google was officially founded as a company;[26][27] Hassan went on to pursue a career in robotics and founded the company Willow Garage in 2006.[28][29]

Larry Page and Sergey Brin in 2003

Then Chairman and CEO Eric Schmidt (left) with co-founders Sergey Brin (center) and Larry Page (right) in 2008

While conventional search engines ranked results by counting how many times the search terms appeared on the page, they theorized about a better system that analyzed the relationships among websites.[31] They called this algorithm PageRank; it determined a website's relevance by the number of pages, and the importance of those pages that linked back to the original site.[32][31] Page told his ideas to Hassan, who began writing the code to implement Page's ideas.[26] Page and Brin would also use their friend Susan Wojcicki's garage as their office when the search engine was set up in 1998.[33]

Google's original homepage had a simplistic design because the company founders had little experience in HTML, the markup language used for designing web pages[30]

Page and Brin originally nicknamed the new search engine "BackRub" because the system checked backlinks to estimate the importance of a site.[23][34][35] Hassan, as well as Alan Steremberg were cited by Page and Brin as being critical to the development of Google. Rajeev Motwani and Terry Winograd later co-authored with Page and Brin the first paper about the project, describing PageRank and the initial prototype of the Google search engine, published in 1998. Héctor García-Molina and Jeffrey Ullman were also cited as contributors to the project.[36] PageRank was influenced by a similar page-ranking and site-scoring algorithm earlier used for RankDex, developed by Robin Li in 1996, with Larry Page's PageRank patent including a citation to Li's earlier RankDex patent; Li later went on to create the Chinese search engine Baidu.[37][38]

Eventually, they changed the name to *Google*; the name of the search engine was a misspelling of the word *googol*,[23][39][40] a very large number written $\mathbf{10^{100}}$ (1 followed by 100 zeros), picked to signify that the search engine was intended to provide large quantities of information.[41]

Google was initially funded by an August 1998 investment of $100,000 from Andy Bechtolsheim,[23] co-founder of Sun Microsystems. This initial investment served as a motivation to incorporate the company to be able to use the funds.[42][43] Page and Brin initially approached David Cheriton for advice because he had a nearby office in Stanford, and they knew he had startup experience, having recently sold the company he co-founded, Granite Systems, to Cisco for $220 million. David arranged a meeting with Page and Brin and his Granite co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim. The meeting was set for 8 a.m. at the front porch of David's home in Palo Alto and it had to be brief because Andy had another meeting at Cisco,

where he now worked after the acquisition, at 9 a.m. Andy briefly tested a demo of the website, liked what he saw, and then went back to his car to grab the check. David Cheriton later also joined in with a $250,000 investment.[44][45]

Google received money from two other angel investors in 1998: Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos, and entrepreneur Ram Shriram.[46] Page and Brin had first approached Shriram, who was a venture capitalist, for funding and counsel, and Shriram invested $250,000 in Google in February 1998. Shriram knew Bezos because Amazon had acquired Junglee, at which Shriram was the president. It was Shriram who told Bezos about Google. Bezos asked Shriram to meet Google's founders and they met six months after Shriram had made his investment when Bezos and his wife were on a vacation trip to the Bay Area. Google's initial funding round had already formally closed but Bezos' status as CEO of Amazon was enough to persuade Page and Brin to extend the round and accept his investment.[47][48]

Between these initial investors, friends and family Google raised around $1,000,000, which is what allowed them to open up their original shop in Menlo Park, California.[49] Craig Silverstein, a fellow PhD student at Stanford, was hired as the first employee.[25][50][51]

After some additional, small investments through the end of 1998 to early 1999,[46] a new $25 million round of funding was announced on June 7, 1999,[52] with major investors including the venture capital firms Kleiner Perkins and Sequoia Capital.[43] Both firms were initially hesitant about investing jointly in Google, as each wanted to retain a larger percentage of control over the company to themselves. Larry and Sergey however insisted on taking investments from both. Both venture companies finally agreed to investing jointly $12.5 million each due to their belief in Google's great potential and through the mediation of earlier angel investors Ron Conway and Ram Shriram who had contacts in the venture companies.[53]

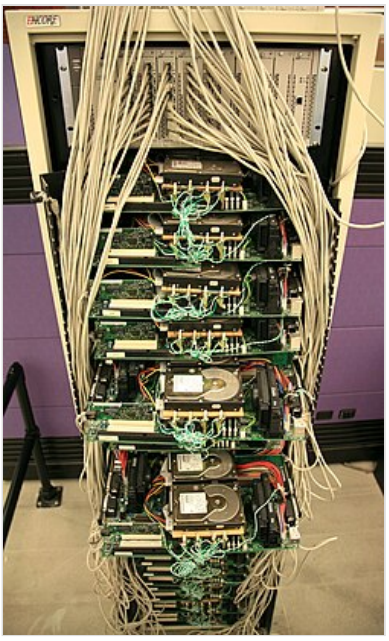
Growth

In March 1999, the company moved its offices to Palo Alto, California,[54] which is home to several prominent Silicon Valley technology start-ups.[55] The next year, Google began selling advertisements associated with search keywords against Page and Brin's initial opposition toward an advertising-funded search engine.[56][25] To maintain an uncluttered page design, advertisements were solely text-based.[57] In June 2000, it was announced that Google would become the default search engine provider for Yahoo!, one of the most popular websites at the time, replacing Inktomi.[58][59]

In 2003, after outgrowing two other locations, the company leased an office complex from Silicon Graphics, at 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway in Mountain View, California.[61] The complex became known as the Googleplex, a play on the word googolplex, the number one followed by a googol of zeroes. Three years later, Google bought the property from SGI for $319 million.[62] By that time, the name "Google" had found its way into everyday language, causing the verb "google" to be added to the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*, denoted as: "to use the Google search engine to obtain information on the Internet".[63][64] The first use of the verb on television appeared in an October 2002 episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.[65]

Additionally, in 2001 Google's investors felt the need to have a strong internal management, and they agreed to hire Eric Schmidt as the chairman and CEO of Google.[49] Eric was proposed by John Doerr from Kleiner Perkins. He had been trying to find a CEO that Sergey and Larry would accept for several months, but they rejected several candidates because they wanted to retain control over the company.

Michael Moritz from Sequoia Capital at one point even menaced requesting Google to immediately pay back Sequoia's $12.5m investment if they did not fulfill their promise to hire a chief executive officer, which had been made verbally during investment negotiations. Eric was not initially enthusiastic about joining Google either, as the company's full potential had not yet been widely recognized at the time, and as he was occupied with his responsibilities at Novell where he was CEO. As part of him joining, Eric agreed to buy $1 million of Google preferred stocks as a way to show his commitment and to provide funds Google needed.[66]



Google's first production server[60]

Initial public offering

On August 19, 2004, Google became a public company via an initial public offering. At that time Page, Brin and Schmidt agreed to work together at Google for 20 years, until the year 2024.[67] The company opened on the NASDAQ National Market under the ticker symbol GOOGL with an offering of 19,605,052 shares at a price of $85 per share.[68][69] Shares were sold in an online auction format using a system built by Morgan Stanley and Credit Suisse, underwriters for the deal.[70][71] The sale of $1.67 billion gave Google a market capitalization of more than $23 billion.[72]

On October 9, 2006, Google acquired YouTube for $1.65 billion in Google stock,[73][74][75][76] On July 20, 2007, Google bids $4.6 billion for the wireless-spectrum auction by the FCC.[77] On March 11, 2008, Google acquired DoubleClick for $3.1 billion, transferring to Google valuable relationships that DoubleClick had with Web publishers and advertising agencies.[78][79] By 2011, Google was handling approximately 3 billion searches per day. To handle this workload, Google built 11 data centers around the world with several thousand servers in each. These data centers allowed Google to handle the ever-changing workload more efficiently.[49]

Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google from 2001 to 2011

In May 2011, the number of monthly unique visitors to Google surpassed one billion for the first time.[80][81] In May 2012, Google acquired Motorola Mobility for $12.5 billion, in its largest acquisition to date.[82][83][84] This purchase was made in part to help Google gain Motorola's considerable patent portfolio on mobile phones and wireless technologies, to help protect Google in its ongoing patent disputes with other companies,[85] mainly Apple and Microsoft,[86] and to allow it to continue to freely offer Android.[87]

2012 onwards

In June 2013, Google acquired Waze for $966 million.[88] While Waze would remain an independent entity, its social features, such as its crowdsourced location platform, were reportedly valuable integrations between Waze and Google Maps, Google's own mapping service.[89] Google announced the

launch of a new company, called Calico, on September 19, 2013, to be led by Apple Inc. chairman Arthur Levinson. In the official public statement, Page explained that the "health and well-being" company would focus on "the challenge of ageing and associated diseases".[90]

On January 26, 2014, Google announced it had agreed to acquire DeepMind Technologies, a privately held AI company from London.[91] Technology news website *Recode* reported that the company was purchased for $400 million, yet the source of the information was not disclosed. A Google spokesperson declined to comment on the price.[92][93] The purchase of DeepMind aids in Google's recent growth in the AI and robotics community.[94] In 2015, DeepMind's AlphaGo became the first computer program to defeat a top human pro at the game of Go.

Entrance of building where Google and its subsidiary Deep Mind are located at 6 Pancras Square, London

According to Interbrand's annual Best Global Brands report, Google has been the second most valuable brand in the world (behind Apple Inc.) in 2013,[95] 2014,[96] 2015,[97] and 2016, with a valuation of $133 billion.[98]

On August 10, 2015, Google announced plans to reorganize its various interests as a conglomerate named Alphabet Inc. Google became Alphabet's largest subsidiary and the umbrella company for Alphabet's Internet interests. Upon completion of the restructuring, Sundar Pichai became CEO of Google, replacing Larry Page, who became CEO of Alphabet.[99][100][101]

On August 8, 2017, Google fired employee James Damore after he distributed a memo throughout the company that argued bias and "Google's Ideological Echo Chamber" clouded their thinking about diversity and inclusion, and that it is also biological factors, not discrimination alone, that cause the average woman to be less interested than men in technical positions.[102] Google CEO Sundar Pichai accused Damore of violating company policy by "advancing harmful gender stereotypes in our workplace", and he was fired on the same day.[103][104][105]

Current CEO, Sundar Pichai, with Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi

Between 2018 and 2019, tensions between the company's leadership and its workers escalated as staff protested company decisions on internal sexual harassment, Dragonfly, a censored Chinese search engine, and Project Maven, a military drone artificial intelligence, which had been seen as areas of revenue growth for the company.[106][107] On October 25, 2018, *The New York Times* published the *exposé*, "How Google Protected Andy Rubin, the 'Father of Android'". The company subsequently announced that "48 employees have been fired over the last two years" for sexual misconduct.[108] On November 1, 2018, more than 20,000 Google employees and contractors staged a global walk-out to protest the company's handling of sexual harassment complaints.[109][110] CEO Sundar Pichai was reported to be in support of the protests.[111] Later in 2019, some workers accused the company of retaliating against internal activists.[107]

On March 19, 2019, Google announced that it would enter the video game market, launching a cloud gaming platform called Google Stadia.[112]

On June 3, 2019, the United States Department of Justice reported that it would investigate Google for antitrust violations.[113] This led to the filing of an antitrust lawsuit in October 2020, on the grounds the company had abused a monopoly position in the search and search advertising markets.[114]

In December 2019, former PayPal chief operating officer Bill Ready became Google's new commerce chief. Ready's role will not be directly involved with Google Pay.[115]

In April 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Google announced several cost-cutting measures. Such measures included slowing down hiring for the remainder of 2020, except for a small number of strategic areas, recalibrating the focus and pace of investments in areas like data centers and machines, and non-business essential marketing and travel.[116] Most employees were also working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the success of it even led to Google announcing that they would be permanently converting some of their jobs to work from home [117]

The 2020 Google services outages disrupted Google services: one in August that affected Google Drive among others, another in November affecting YouTube, and a third in December affecting the entire suite of Google applications. All three outages were resolved within hours.[118][119][120]

In 2021, the Alphabet Workers Union was founded, composed mostly of Google employees.[121]

In January 2021, the Australian Government proposed legislation that would require Google and Facebook to pay media companies for the right to use their content. In response, Google threatened to close off access to its search engine in Australia.[122]

In March 2021, Google reportedly paid $20 million for Ubisoft ports on Google Stadia.[123] Google spent "tens of millions of dollars" on getting major publishers such as Ubisoft and Take-Two to bring some of their biggest games to Stadia.[124]

In April 2021, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Google ran a years-long program called "Project Bernanke" that used data from past advertising bids to gain an advantage over competing for ad services. This was revealed in documents concerning the antitrust lawsuit filed by ten US states against Google in December.[125]

In September 2021, the Australian government announced plans to curb Google's capability to sell targeted ads, claiming that the company has a monopoly on the market harming publishers, advertisers, and consumers.[126]

In 2022, Google began accepting requests for the removal of phone numbers, physical addresses and email addresses from its search results. It had previously accepted requests for removing confidential data only, such as Social Security numbers, bank account and credit card numbers, personal signatures, and medical records. Even with the new policy, Google may remove information from only certain but not all search queries. It would not remove content that is "broadly useful", such as news articles, or already part of the public record.[127]

In May 2022, Google announced that the company had acquired California based, MicroLED display technology development and manufacturing Start-up company Raxium. Raxium is set to join Google's Devices and Services team to aid in the development of micro-optics, monolithic integration, and system integration.[128][129]

In December 2022, Google debuted OSV-Scanner,[130][131] a Go tool for finding security holes in open source software, which pulls from the largest open source vulnerability database of its kind to defend against supply chain attacks.

Following the success of ChatGPT and concerns that Google was falling behind in the AI race, Google's senior management issued a "code red"[132] and a "directive that all of its most important products—those with more than a billion users—must incorporate generative AI within months".[133] In March 2023, in direct response to the rapid rise of ChatGPT, Google released Bard (now Gemini), a generative artificial intelligence chatbot.[134]

In early May 2023, Google announced its plans to build two additional data centers in Ohio. These centers, which will be built in Columbus and Lancaster, will power up the company's tools, including AI technology. The said data hub will add to the already operational center near Columbus, bringing Google's total investment in Ohio to over $2 billion.[135]

In August 2024, Google would lose a lawsuit which started in 2020 in lower court, as it was found that the company had an illegal monopoly over Internet search.[136] D.C. Circuit Court Judge Amit Mehta held that this monopoly was in violation of Section 2 of the Sherman Act.[137] In September 2024, the EU Court of Justice, based in Europe, would also find that Google held an illegal monopoly, in this case with regards to its shopping search, and could not avoid paying a €2.4 billion fine.[138] The EU Court of Justice found that Google's treatment of rival shopping searches, which the court referred to as "discriminatory", was in violation of the Digital Markets Act.[138]

In October 2024, Google was fined by a local Russian court a symbolic 2.5 decillion dollars for allegedly blocking pro-Kremlin propaganda. No payment was made.[139]

In November 2024, Google announced the establishment of a new AI hub in Saudi Arabia, aiming to support the Kingdom's economic growth and technological development as part of its Vision 2030 initiative. This AI hub is projected to contribute up to $71 billion to Saudi Arabia's economy by advancing AI-driven solutions tailored to the region's specific needs and training local talent.[140]

The partnership between Google and Saudi Arabia includes collaboration with key stakeholders, such as the Public Investment Fund (PIF), to develop AI applications that will benefit sectors like healthcare, finance, oil and gas, and logistics. The initiative focuses on creating localized AI technologies, with an emphasis on integrating Arabic language capabilities and enabling widespread cloud adoption.[141]

In March 2025, Google agreed to acquire Wiz, a New York-based cybersecurity startup focusing on cloud computing, for US$32 billion. This cash deal would be Google's biggest ever, as well as it currently being the most expensive deal of 2025. Alphabet reportedly tried to close a deal for only $23 billion in 2024, but this fell apart after concerns about regulatory hurdles, among other issues. Wiz, a company located in the U.S. and Israel, was cofounded in 2020 by Assaf Rappaport. The company is backed by a number of

Silicon Valley venture capitalists, as well as notably being partnered with Amazon and Microsoft, as listed in their website. Google reportedly said "the deal would help artificial-intelligence companies get better security and use more than one cloud service."[142]

Products and services

Search engine

Google indexes billions of web pages to allow users to search for the information they desire through the use of keywords and operators.[143] According to comScore market research from November 2009, Google Search is the dominant search engine in the United States market, with a market share of 65.6%.[144] In May 2017, Google enabled a new "Personal" tab in Google Search, letting users search for content in their Google accounts' various services, including email messages from Gmail and photos from Google Photos.[145][146]

Google launched its Google News service in 2002, an automated service which summarizes news articles from various websites.[147] Google also hosts Google Books, a service which searches the text found in books in its database and shows limited previews or and the full book where allowed.[148]

Google expanded its search services to include shopping (launched originally as Froogle in 2002),[149] finance (launched 2006),[150] and flights (launched 2011).[151]

Advertising

Google at ad-tech London, 2010

Google generates most of its revenues from advertising. This includes sales of apps, purchases made in-app, digital content products on Google and YouTube, Android and licensing and service fees, including fees received for Google Cloud offerings. Forty-six percent of this profit was from clicks (cost per clicks), amounting to US$109,652 million in 2017. This includes three principal methods, namely AdMob, AdSense (such as AdSense for Content, AdSense for Search, etc.) and DoubleClick AdExchange.[152] In addition to its own algorithms for understanding search requests, Google uses technology from its acquisition of DoubleClick, to project user interest and target advertising to the search context and the user history.[153][154] In 2007, Google launched "AdSense for Mobile", taking advantage of the emerging mobile advertising market.[155]

Google Analytics allows website owners to track where and how people use their website, for example by examining click rates for all the links on a page.[156] Google advertisements can be placed on third-party websites in a two-part program. Google Ads allows advertisers to display their advertisements in the Google content network, through a cost-per-click scheme.[157] The sister service, Google AdSense, allows website owners to display these advertisements on their website and earn money every time ads are clicked.[158] One of the criticisms of this program is the possibility of click fraud, which occurs when a person or automated script clicks on advertisements without being interested in the product, causing the

advertiser to pay money to Google unduly. Industry reports in 2006 claimed that approximately 14 to 20 percent of clicks were fraudulent or invalid.[159] Google Search Console (rebranded from Google Webmaster Tools in May 2015) allows webmasters to check the sitemap, crawl rate, and for security issues of their websites, as well as optimize their website's visibility.

Generative artificial intelligence

Google had previously used virtual assistants and chatbots, such as Google Bard, prior to the announcement of Gemini in March 2024. None of them, however, had been seen as legitimate competitors to ChatGPT, unlike Gemini.[160] An AI training program for Google employees was also introduced in April 2024.[161]

Google has created the text-to-image model Imagen,[162] and the text-to-video model Veo.[163] In 2025, Google announced SynthID Detector, a tool that uses watermarking to identify whether content such as text, images, audio, or video was generated using Google products.[164]

In 2023, Google released NotebookLM, an online tool for synthesizing documents using Gemini. In September 2024, it gained attention for its "Audio Overview" feature, which generates podcast-like summaries of documents.[165][166] Google also developed LearnLM, a family of language models serving as personal AI tutors.[167]

Consumer services

Web-based services

Google offers Gmail for email,[168] Google Calendar for time-management and scheduling,[169] Google Maps and Google Earth for mapping, navigation and satellite imagery,[170] Google Drive for cloud storage of files,[171] Google Docs, Sheets and Slides for productivity,[171] Google Photos for photo storage and sharing,[172] Google Keep for note-taking,[173] Google Translate for language translation,[174] YouTube for video viewing and sharing,[175] Google My Business for managing public business information,[176] Google Classroom for managing assignments and communication in education,[177] and Duo for social interaction.[178] A job search product has also existed since before 2017,[179][180][181] Google for Jobs is an enhanced search feature that aggregates listings from job boards and career sites.[182] Google Earth, launched in 2005, allows users to see high-definition satellite pictures from all over the world for free through a client software downloaded to their computers.[183]

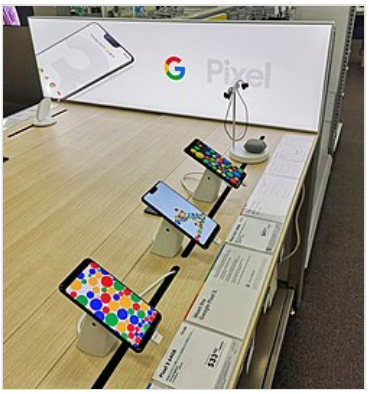
Software

Google develops the Android mobile operating system,[184] as well as its smartwatch,[185] television,[186] car,[187] and Internet of things-enabled smart devices variations.[188] It also develops the Google Chrome web browser,[189] and ChromeOS, an operating system based on Chrome.[190]

Hardware

In January 2010, Google released Nexus One, the first Android phone under its own brand.[191] It spawned a number of phones and tablets under the "Nexus" branding[192] until its eventual discontinuation in 2016, replaced by a new brand called Pixel.[193]

In 2011, the Chromebook was introduced, which runs on ChromeOS.[194]



Google Pixel smartphones on display in a store

In July 2013, Google introduced the Chromecast dongle, which allows users to stream content from their smartphones to televisions.[195][196]

In June 2014, Google announced Google Cardboard, a simple cardboard viewer that lets the user place their smartphone in a special front compartment to view virtual reality (VR) media.[197]

In October 2016, Google announced Daydream View, a lightweight VR viewer which lets the user place their smartphone in the front hinge to view VR media.[198][199]

Other hardware products include:

- Nest, a series of voice assistant smart speakers that can answer voice queries, play music, find information from apps (calendar, weather etc.), and control third-party smart home appliances (users can tell it to turn on the lights, for example). The Google Nest line includes the original Google Home[200] (later succeeded by the Nest Audio), the Google Home Mini (later succeeded by the Nest Mini), the Google Home Max, the Google Home Hub (later rebranded as the Nest Hub), and the Nest Hub Max.
- Nest Wifi (originally Google Wifi), a connected set of Wi-Fi routers to simplify and extend coverage of home Wi-Fi.[201]

Enterprise services

Google Workspace (formerly G Suite until October 2020[202]) is a monthly subscription offering for organizations and businesses to get access to a collection of Google's services, including Gmail, Google Drive and Google Docs, Google Sheets and Google Slides, with additional administrative tools, unique domain names, and 24/7 support.[203]

On September 24, 2012,[204] Google launched Google for Entrepreneurs, a largely not-for-profit business incubator providing startups with co-working spaces known as Campuses, with assistance to startup founders that may include workshops, conferences, and mentorships.[205] Presently, there are seven Campus locations: Berlin, London, Madrid, Seoul, São Paulo, Tel Aviv, and Warsaw.

On March 15, 2016, Google announced the introduction of Google Analytics 360 Suite, "a set of integrated data and marketing analytics products, designed specifically for the needs of enterprise-class marketers" which can be integrated with BigQuery on the Google Cloud Platform. Among other things, the suite is designed to help "enterprise class marketers" "see the complete customer journey", generate "useful insights", and "deliver engaging experiences to the right people".[206] Jack Marshall of *The Wall Street Journal* wrote that the suite competes with existing marketing cloud offerings by companies including Adobe, Oracle, Salesforce, and IBM.[207]

Internet services

In February 2010, Google announced the Google Fiber project, with experimental plans to build an ultra-high-speed broadband network for 50,000 to 500,000 customers in one or more American cities.[208][209] Following Google's corporate restructure to make Alphabet Inc. its parent company, Google Fiber was moved to Alphabet's Access division.[210][211]

In April 2015, Google announced Project Fi, a mobile virtual network operator, that combines Wi-Fi and cellular networks from different telecommunication providers in an effort to enable seamless connectivity and fast Internet signal.[212][213]

Financial services

In August 2023, Google became the first major tech company to join the OpenWallet Foundation, launched earlier in the year, whose goal was creating open-source software for interoperable digital wallets.[214]

Corporate affairs

Stock price performance and quarterly earnings

Google's initial public offering (IPO) took place on August 19, 2004. At IPO, the company offered 19,605,052 shares at a price of $85 per share.[68][69] The sale of $1.67 billion gave Google a market capitalization of more than $23 billion.[72] The stock performed well after the IPO, with shares hitting $350 for the first time on October 31, 2007,[215] primarily because of strong sales and earnings in the online advertising market.[216] The surge in stock price was fueled mainly by individual investors, as opposed to large institutional investors and mutual funds.[216] GOOG shares split into GOOG class C shares and GOOGL class A shares.[217] The company is listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange under the ticker symbols GOOGL and GOOG, and on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol GGQ1. These ticker symbols now refer to Alphabet Inc., Google's holding company, since the fourth quarter of 2015.[218]

In the third quarter of 2005, Google reported a 700% increase in profit, largely due to large companies shifting their advertising strategies from newspapers, magazines, and television to the Internet.[219][220][221]

For the 2006 fiscal year, the company reported $10.492 billion in total advertising revenues and only $112 million in licensing and other revenues.[222] In 2011, 96% of Google's revenue was derived from its advertising programs.[223]

Google generated $50 billion in annual revenue for the first time in 2012, generating $38 billion the previous year. In January 2013, then-CEO Larry Page commented, "We ended 2012 with a strong quarter ... Revenues were up 36% year-on-year, and 8% quarter-on-quarter. And we hit $50 billion in revenues for the first time last year – not a bad achievement in just a decade and a half."[224]

Google's consolidated revenue for the third quarter of 2013 was reported in mid-October 2013 as $14.89 billion, a 12 percent increase compared to the previous quarter.[225] Google's Internet business was responsible for $10.8 billion of this total, with an increase in the number of users' clicks on advertisements.[226] By January 2014, Google's market capitalization had grown to $397 billion.[227]

Tax avoidance strategies

Google uses various tax avoidance strategies. On the list of largest technology companies by revenue, it pays the lowest taxes to the countries of origin of its revenues. Google between 2007 and 2010 saved $3.1 billion in taxes by shuttling non-U.S. profits through Ireland and the Netherlands and then to Bermuda. Such techniques lower its non-U.S. tax rate to 2.3 per cent, while normally the corporate tax rate in, for instance, the UK is 28 per cent.[228] This reportedly sparked a French investigation into Google's transfer pricing practices in 2012.[229]

In 2020, Google said it had overhauled its controversial global tax structure and consolidated all of its intellectual property holdings back to the U.S.[230]

Google Vice-president Matt Brittin testified to the Public Accounts Committee of the UK House of Commons that his UK sales team made no sales and hence owed no sales taxes to the UK.[231] In January 2016, Google reached a settlement with the UK to pay £130m in back taxes plus higher taxes in future.[232] In 2017, Google channeled $22.7 billion from the Netherlands to Bermuda to reduce its tax bill.[233]

In 2013, Google ranked 5th in lobbying spending, up from 213th in 2003. In 2012, the company ranked 2nd in campaign donations of technology and Internet sections.[234]

Corporate identity

Google's logo from 2013 to 2015. The logo had been used with minor changes since 1999.

The name "Google" originated from a misspelling of "googol",[235][236] which refers to the number represented by a 1 followed by one-hundred zeros. Page and Brin write in their original paper on PageRank:[36] "We chose our system name, Google, because it is a common spelling of googol, or 10^{100}[,] and fits well with our goal of building very large-scale search engines." Having found its way increasingly into everyday language, the verb "google" was added to the *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 2006, meaning "to use the Google search engine to obtain information on the Internet."[237][64] Google's mission statement, from the outset, was "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful",[238] and its unofficial slogan is "Don't be evil".[239] In October 2015, a related motto was adopted in the Alphabet corporate code of conduct by the phrase: "Do the right thing".[240] The original motto was retained in the code of conduct of Google, now a subsidiary of Alphabet.

The original Google logo was designed by Sergey Brin.[241] Since 1998, Google has been designing special, temporary alternate logos to place on their homepage intended to celebrate holidays, events, achievements and people. The first Google Doodle was in honor of the Burning Man Festival of 1998.[242][243] The doodle was designed by Larry Page and Sergey Brin to notify users of their absence in

case the servers crashed. Subsequent Google Doodles were designed by an outside contractor, until Larry and Sergey asked then-intern Dennis Hwang to design a logo for Bastille Day in 2000. From that point onward, Doodles have been organized and created by a team of employees termed "Doodlers".[244]

Google has a tradition of creating April Fools' Day jokes. Its first on April 1, 2000, was Google MentalPlex which allegedly featured the use of mental power to search the web.[245] In 2007, Google announced a free Internet service called TiSP, or Toilet Internet Service Provider, where one obtained a connection by flushing one end of a fiber-optic cable down their toilet.[246]

Google's services contain easter eggs, such as the Swedish Chef's "Bork bork bork", Pig Latin, "Hacker" or leetspeak, Elmer Fudd, Pirate, and Klingon as language selections for its search engine.[247] When searching for the word "anagram", meaning a rearrangement of letters from one word to form other valid words, Google's suggestion feature displays "Did you mean: nag a ram?"[248] Since 2019, Google runs free online courses to help engineers learn how to plan and author technical documentation better.[249]

Workplace culture

On *Fortune* magazine's list of the best companies to work for, Google ranked first in 2007, 2008 and 2012,[250][251][252] and fourth in 2009 and 2010.[253][254] Google was also nominated in 2010 to be the world's most attractive employer to graduating students in the Universum Communications talent attraction index.[255] Google's corporate philosophy includes principles such as "you can make money without doing evil", "you can be serious without a suit", and "work should be challenging and the challenge should be fun".[256]

Google employees marching in the Pride in London parade in 2016

As of September 30, 2020, Alphabet Inc. had 132,121 employees,[257] of which more than 100,000 worked for Google.[8] Google's 2020 diversity report states that 32 percent of its workforce are women and 68 percent are men, with the ethnicity of its workforce being predominantly white (51.7%) and Asian (41.9%).[258] Within tech roles, 23.6 percent were women; and 26.7 percent of leadership roles were held by women.[259] In addition to its 100,000+ full-time employees, Google used about 121,000 temporary workers and contractors, as of March 2019.[8]

Google's employees are hired based on a hierarchical system. Employees are split into six hierarchies based on experience and can range "from entry-level data center workers at level one to managers and experienced engineers at level six".[260] As a motivation technique, Google uses a policy known as Innovation Time Off, where Google engineers are encouraged to spend 20% of their work time on projects that interest them. Some of Google's services, such as Gmail, Google News, Orkut, and AdSense, originated from these independent endeavors.[261] In a talk at Stanford University, Marissa Mayer, Google's vice-president of Search Products and User Experience until July 2012, showed that half of all new product launches in the second half of 2005 had originated from the Innovation Time Off.[262]

In 2005, articles in *The New York Times*[263] and other sources began suggesting that Google had lost its anti-corporate, no evil philosophy.[264][265][266] In an effort to maintain the company's unique culture, Google designated a Chief Culture Officer whose purpose was to develop and maintain the culture and work on ways to keep true to the core values that the company was founded on.[267] Google has also

faced allegations of sexism and ageism from former employees.[268][269] In 2013, a class action against several Silicon Valley companies, including Google, was filed for alleged "no cold call" agreements which restrained the recruitment of high-tech employees.[270] In a lawsuit filed January 8, 2018, multiple employees and job applicants alleged Google discriminated against a class defined by their "conservative political views[,] male gender[,] and/or [...] Caucasian or Asian race".[271]

On January 25, 2020, the formation of an international workers union of Google employees, Alpha Global, was announced.[272] The coalition is made up of "13 different unions representing workers in 10 countries, including the United States, [the] United Kingdom, and Switzerland".[273] The group is affiliated with the UNI Global Union, which represents nearly 20 million international workers from various unions and federations. The formation of the union is in response to persistent allegations of mistreatment of Google employees and a toxic workplace culture.[273][274][271] Google had previously been accused of surveilling and firing employees who were suspected of organizing a workers union.[275] In 2021, court documents revealed that between 2018 and 2020, Google ran an anti-union campaign called Project Vivian to "convince them (employees) that unions suck".[276]

In February 2025, Google dropped their commitment to make "diversity, equity, and inclusion part of everything we do" from their annual investor report. This action followed Meta, Amazon, Pepsi, McDonald's, Walmart and others who all have rolled back their DEI programmes.[277]

Office locations

Google's headquarters in Mountain View, California is referred to as "the Googleplex", a play on words on the number googolplex and the headquarters itself being a *complex* of buildings. Internationally, Google has over 78 offices in more than 50 countries.[278]

Google's New York City office building houses its largest advertising sales team.

In 2006, Google moved into about 300,000 square feet (27,900 m^2) of office space at 111 Eighth Avenue in Manhattan, New York City. The office houses its largest advertising sales team.[279] In 2010, Google bought the building housing the headquarter, in a deal that valued the property at around $1.9 billion.[280][281] In March 2018, Google's parent company Alphabet bought the nearby Chelsea Market building for $2.4 billion. The sale is touted as one of the most expensive real estate transactions for a single building in the history of New York.[282][283][284][285] In November 2018, Google announced its plan to expand its New York City office to a capacity of 12,000 employees.[286] The same December, it was announced that a $1 billion, 1,700,000-square-foot (160,000 m^2) headquarters for Google would be built in Manhattan's Hudson Square neighborhood.[287][288] Called Google Hudson Square, the new campus is projected to more than double the number of Google employees working in New York City.[289]

Google's Toronto office

By late 2006, Google established a new headquarters for its AdWords division in Ann Arbor, Michigan.[290] In November 2006, Google opened offices on Carnegie Mellon's campus in Pittsburgh, focusing on shopping-related advertisement coding and smartphone applications and programs.[291][292] Other office locations in the U.S. include Atlanta; Austin; Boulder, Colorado; Cambridge, Massachusetts; San Francisco; Seattle and Kirkland, Washington; Birmingham, Michigan; Reston, Virginia, Washington, D.C.,[293] and Madison, Wisconsin.[294]

It also has product research and development operations in cities around the world, namely Sydney (birthplace location of Google Maps)[295] and London (part of Android development).[296] In November 2013, Google announced plans for a new London headquarter, a 1 million square foot office able to accommodate 4,500 employees. Recognized as one of the biggest ever commercial property acquisitions at the time of the deal's announcement in January,[297] Google submitted plans for the new headquarter to the Camden Council in June 2017.[298][299] In May 2015, Google announced its intention to create its own campus in Hyderabad, India. The new campus, reported to be the company's largest outside the United States, will accommodate 13,000 employees.[300][301]

Google's Dublin Ireland office, headquarters of Google Ads for Europe

Google's Global Offices sum a total of 86 locations worldwide,[302] with 32 offices in North America, three of them in Canada and 29 in United States Territory, California being the state with the most Google's offices with 9 in total including the Googleplex. In the Latin America Region Google counts with 6 offices, in Europe 24 (3 of them in UK). The Asia Pacific region counts with 26 offices principally five in India and three in Australia, three in China, and the Africa Middle East region counts five offices.

North America

SN	City	Country or US State
1.	Ann Arbor	Michigan
2.	Atlanta	Georgia
3.	Austin	Texas
4.	Boulder	Colorado
5.	Boulder – Pearl Place	Colorado
6.	Boulder – Walnut	Colorado
7.	Cambridge	Massachusetts
8.	Chapel Hill	North Carolina
9.	Chicago – Carpenter	Illinois
10.	Chicago – Fulton Market	Illinois
11.	Chicago – Loop (2026)[303]	Illinois
12.	Detroit	Michigan
13.	Irvine	California
14.	Kirkland	Washington
15.	Kitchener	Canada
16.	Los Angeles	California
17.	Madison	Wisconsin
18.	Miami	Florida
19.	Montreal	Canada
20.	Mountain View	California
21.	New York	New York
22.	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania
23.	Playa Vista	California
24.	Portland	Oregon
25.	Redwood City	California
26.	Reston	Virginia
27.	San Bruno	California
28.	San Diego	California
29.	San Francisco – **HQ**	California
30.	Seattle	Washington
31.	Sunnyvale	California
32.	Toronto	Canada
33.	Washington DC	District of Columbia

Latin America

SN	City	Country
1.	Belo Horizonte	Brazil
2.	Bogotá	Colombia
3.	Buenos Aires	Argentina
4.	Mexico City	Mexico
5.	San Salvador	El Salvador
6.	Santiago	Chile
7.	São Paulo	Brazil

Europe

SN	City	Country
1.	Aarhus	Denmark
2.	Amsterdam	Netherlands
3.	Athens	Greece
4.	Berlin	Germany
5.	Brussels	Belgium
6.	Bucharest	Romania
7.	Copenhagen	Denmark
8.	Dublin	Ireland
9.	Hamburg	Germany
10.	Kraków	Poland
11.	Lisbon	Portugal
12.	London – 6PS	United Kingdom
13.	London – BEL	United Kingdom
14.	London – CSG	United Kingdom
15.	Madrid	Spain
16.	Milan	Italy
17.	Munich	Germany
18.	Oslo	Norway
19.	Paris	France
20.	Prague	Czech Republic
21.	Stockholm	Sweden
22.	Vienna	Austria
23.	Vilnius	Lithuania
24.	Warsaw	Poland
25.	Wrocław	Poland
26.	Zürich – BRA	Switzerland
27.	Zürich – EUR	Switzerland

Asia–Pacific

SN	City	Country
1.	Auckland	New Zealand
2.	Bangalore – Kyoto Campus	India
3.	Bangalore – OMR	India
4.	Bangkok	Thailand
5.	Beijing	China
6.	Gurgaon	India
7.	Ho Chi Minh City	Vietnam
8.	Hong Kong	Hong Kong
9.	Hyderabad	India
10.	Jakarta	Indonesia
11.	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia
12.	Manila	Philippines
13.	Melbourne	Australia
14.	Mumbai	India
15.	New Taipei City	Taiwan
16.	Pune	India
17.	Seoul	South Korea
18.	Shanghai	China
19.	Shenzhen	China
20.	Singapore	Singapore
21.	Sydney – ODR	Australia
22.	Sydney – PIR	Australia
23.	Taipei	Taiwan
24.	Tokyo – RPG	Japan
25.	Tokyo – STRM	Japan
26.	Zhubei	Taiwan

Africa and the Middle East

SN	City	Country
1.	Accra	Ghana
2.	Doha	Qatar
3.	Dubai	United Arab Emirates
4.	Haifa	Israel
5.	Istanbul	Turkey
6.	Johannesburg	South Africa
7.	Lagos	Nigeria
8.	Tel Aviv	Israel

Infrastructure

Google has data centers in North and South America, Asia, and Europe.[304] There is no official data on the number of servers in Google data centers; however, research and advisory firm Gartner estimated in a July 2016 report that Google at the time had 2.5 million servers.[305] Traditionally, Google relied on parallel computing on commodity hardware like mainstream x86 computers (similar to home PCs) to keep costs per query low.[306][307][308] In 2005, it started developing its own designs, which were only revealed in 2009.[308]

Google has built its own private submarine communications cables. The first cable, named Curie, connects California with Chile and was completed on November 15, 2019.[309][310] The second fully Google-owned undersea cable, named Dunant, connects the United States with France and is planned to begin operation in 2020.[311] Google's third subsea cable, Equiano, will connect Lisbon, Portugal with Lagos, Nigeria and Cape Town, South Africa.[312] The company's fourth cable, named Grace Hopper, connects landing points in New York, US, Bude, UK and Bilbao, Spain, and is expected to become operational in 2022.[313]

Environment

In October 2006, the company announced plans to install thousands of solar panels to provide up to 1.6 Megawatt of electricity, enough to satisfy approximately 30% of the campus' energy needs.[314][315] The system is the largest rooftop photovoltaic power station constructed on a U.S. corporate campus and one of the largest on any corporate site in the world.[314] Since 2007, Google has aimed for carbon neutrality in regard to its operations.[316]

In Spring 2009, Google hired a herd of 200 goats for a week from California Grazing to mow their lawn. It was apparently more eco-friendly.[317]

Google disclosed in September 2011 that it "continuously uses enough electricity to power 200,000 homes", almost 260 million watts or about a quarter of the output of a nuclear power plant. Total carbon emissions for 2010 were just under 1.5 million metric tons, mostly due to fossil fuels that provide

electricity for the data centers. Google said that 25 percent of its energy was supplied by renewable fuels in 2010. An average search uses only 0.3 watt-hours of electricity, so all global searches are only 12.5 million watts or 5% of the total electricity consumption by Google.[318]

In 2010, Google Energy made its first investment in a renewable energy project, putting $38.8 million into two wind farms in North Dakota. The company announced the two locations will generate 169.5 megawatts of power, enough to supply 55,000 homes.[319] In February 2010, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission granted Google an authorization to buy and sell energy at market rates.[320] The corporation exercised this authorization in September 2013 when it announced it would purchase all the electricity produced by the not-yet-built 240-megawatt Happy Hereford wind farm.[321]

In July 2010, Google signed an agreement with an Iowa wind farm to buy 114 megawatts of power for 20 years.[322]

In December 2016, Google announced that—starting in 2017—it would purchase enough renewable energy to match 100% of the energy usage of its data centers and offices. The commitment will make Google "the world's largest corporate buyer of renewable power, with commitments reaching 2.6 gigawatts (2,600 megawatts) of wind and solar energy".[323][324][325]

In November 2017, Google bought 536 megawatts of wind power. The purchase made the firm reach 100% renewable energy. The wind energy comes from two power plants in South Dakota, one in Iowa and one in Oklahoma.[326] In September 2019, Google's chief executive announced plans for a $2 billion wind and solar investment, the biggest renewable energy deal in corporate history. This will grow their green energy profile by 40%, giving them an extra 1.6 gigawatt of clean energy, the company said.[327]

In September 2020, Google announced it had retroactively offset all of its carbon emissions since the company's foundation in 1998.[328] It also stated that it is committed to operating its data centers and offices using only carbon-free energy by 2030.[329] In October 2020, the company pledged to make the packaging for its hardware products 100% plastic-free and 100% recyclable by 2025. It also said that all its final assembly manufacturing sites will achieve a UL 2799 Zero Waste to Landfill certification by 2022 by ensuring that the vast majority of waste from the manufacturing process is recycled instead of ending up in a landfill.[330]

In 2023 Google consumed 24 TWh of electricity, more than countries such as Iceland, Ghana, the Dominican Republic, or Tunisia.[331]

Climate change denial and misinformation

Google donates to climate change denial political groups including the State Policy Network and the Competitive Enterprise Institute.[332][333] The company also actively funds and profits from climate disinformation by monetizing ad spaces on most of the largest climate disinformation sites.[334] Google continued to monetize and profit from sites propagating climate disinformation even after the company updated their policy to prohibit placing their ads on similar sites.[335]

Philanthropy

In 2004, Google formed the not-for-profit philanthropic Google.org, with a start-up fund of $1 billion.[336] The mission of the organization is to create awareness about climate change, global public health, and global poverty. One of its first projects was to develop a viable plug-in hybrid electric vehicle that can attain 100 miles per gallon. Google hired Larry Brilliant as the program's executive director in 2004[337] and Megan Smith has since replaced him as director.[338]

In March 2007, in partnership with the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI), Google hosted the first Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival at its headquarters in Mountain View.[339] In 2011, Google donated 1 million euros to International Mathematical Olympiad to support the next five annual International Mathematical Olympiads (2011–2015).[340][341] In July 2012, Google launched a "Legalize Love" campaign in support of gay rights.[342]

In 2008, Google announced its "project 10^{100}", which accepted ideas for how to help the community and then allowed Google users to vote on their favorites.[343] After two years of no update, during which many wondered what had happened to the program,[344] Google revealed the winners of the project, giving a total of ten million dollars to various ideas ranging from non-profit organizations that promote education to a website that intends to make all legal documents public and online.[345]

Responding to the humanitarian crisis after the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, Google announced a $15 million donation to support Ukrainian citizens.[346] The company also decided to transform its office in Warsaw into a help center for refugees.[347]

Also in February 2022, Google announced a $100 million fund to expand skills training and job placement for low-income Americans, in conjunction with non-profits Year Up, Social Finance, and Merit America.[348]

Criticism and controversies

Google has had criticism over issues such as aggressive tax avoidance,[349] search neutrality, copyright, censorship of search results and content,[350] and privacy.[351][352]

Other criticisms are alleged misuse and manipulation of search results, its use of other people's intellectual property, concerns that its compilation of data may violate people's privacy, and the energy consumption of its servers, as well as concerns over traditional business issues such as monopoly, restraint of trade, anti-competitive practices, and patent infringement.

San Francisco activists protest privately owned shuttle buses that transport workers for tech companies such as Google from their homes in San Francisco and Oakland to corporate campuses in Silicon Valley.

2018

In July 2018, Mozilla program manager Chris Peterson accused Google of intentionally slowing down YouTube performance on Firefox.[353][354]

According to Ryan Gallagher of The Intercept in August 2018, Google was developing for the People's Republic of China a censored version of its search engine (known as Dragonfly) "that will blacklist websites and search terms about human rights, democracy, religion, and peaceful protest".[355] Google was grilled at a Senate committee hearing on the project one month later.[356][357] The project was canceled in December following the backlash it garnered both externally and internally within the company.[358][359]

2019

In 2019, a hub for critics of Google dedicated to abstaining from using Google products coalesced in the Reddit online community /r/degoogle.[360] The DeGoogle grassroots campaign continues to grow as privacy activists highlight information about Google products, and the associated incursion on personal privacy rights by the company.

In April 2019, former Mozilla executive Jonathan Nightingale accused Google of intentionally and systematically sabotaging the Firefox browser over the past decade in order to boost adoption of Google Chrome.[354]

In November 2019, the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Health and Human Services began investigation into Project Nightingale, to assess whether the "mass collection of individuals' medical records" complied with HIPAA.[361] According to *The Wall Street Journal*, Google secretively began the project in 2018, with St. Louis-based healthcare company Ascension.[362]

2022

In a 2022 National Labor Relations Board ruling, court documents suggested that Google sponsored a secretive project—*Project Vivian*—to counsel its employees and to discourage them from forming unions.[276]

Google reportedly paid Apple $22 billion in 2022 to maintain its position as the default search engine on Safari. This deal underscores the intense competition in the tech industry for dominance in the search market. It marks one of the largest payments between two tech giants in recent years.[363]

2023

On May 1, 2023, Google placed an ad against anti-disinformation Brazilian Congressional Bill No. 2630, which was about to be approved, on its search homepage in Brazil, calling on its users to ask congressional representatives to oppose the legislation. The country's government and judiciary accused the company of undue interference in the congressional debate, saying it could amount to abuse of economic power and ordering the company to change the ad within two hours of notification or face fines of R$1 million (2023) (US$185,528.76) per non-compliance hour. The company then promptly removed the ad.[364][365]

2024

In March 2024, a former Google software engineer and Chinese national, Linwei Ding, was accused of stealing confidential artificial intelligence information from the company and handing it to Chinese corporations.[366] Ding had allegedly stolen over 500 files from the company over the course of 5 years,

having been hired in 2019.[367] Upon discovering Ding had been in contact with Chinese state-owned companies, Google notified the FBI, who carried on the investigation.[368]

In May 2024, a misconfiguration in Google Cloud led to the accidental deletion of UniSuper's $135 billion Australian pension fund account, affecting over half a million members who were unable to access their accounts for a week. The outage, attributed to a cloud service error and not a cyberattack, prompted a joint apology from UniSuper and Google Cloud executives, who assured members that no personal data was compromised and restoration efforts were underway.[369]

In August 2024, Google sent an email to users informing them of its legal obligation to disclose certain confidential information to U.S. government authorities. The company stated that when it receives valid requests from government agencies to produce documents without redacting confidential customer information, it may produce such documents even if they are confidential to users. However, it will request confidential treatment of such information from the government.[370]

In September 2024, Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) provisionally found that Google engaged in anti-competitive practices in the online advertising technology market, potentially harming thousands of UK publishers and advertisers. The investigation claimed Google used its market power to prevent rivals from competing fairly, affecting billions spent on digital ads. Google rejected the findings as flawed, stating its ad tech benefits businesses. If found guilty, Google could face penalties of up to 10% of its global turnover. Similar investigations are ongoing in the U.S. and EU, where regulators have suggested that Google may need to sell part of its ad-tech business.[371]

2025

In January 2025, U.S. federal judge Richard Seeborg rejected Google's motion to dismiss a class-action lawsuit. The lawsuit claims Google collected data from users who had specifically opted out of tracking. The trial is scheduled for August 2025.[372]

It was ruled that US Department of Justice alongside 17 other states that Google operates a monopoly in online advertising technology. The case will now move to a remedies stage which may lead to Alphabet, the owner of Google, being broken up.[373]

Palestine

Google is also part of Project Nimbus, a $1.2 billion deal in which the technology companies Google and Amazon will provide Israel and its military with artificial intelligence, machine learning, and other cloud computing services, including building local cloud sites that will "keep information within Israel's borders under strict security guidelines."[374][375][376] The contract has been criticized by shareholders and employees over concerns that the project could lead to human rights abuses against Palestinians, in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the disputed status of Palestinian territories.[377][378] Ariel Koren, a former marketing manager for Google's educational products and an outspoken critic of the project, wrote that Google "systematically silences Palestinian, Jewish, Arab and Muslim voices concerned about Google's complicity in violations of Palestinian human rights—to the point of formally retaliating against workers and creating an environment of fear", and said she was retaliated against for organizing against the project.[374][379]

In March 2024, *The New York Times* reported that Google Photos was being used in a facial recognition program by Unit 8200, a surveillance unit of the Israeli Defense Forces, to surveil Palestinians in the Gaza Strip amid the Gaza war. A Google spokesman commented that the service is free and "does not provide identities for unknown people in photographs".[380]

On April 18, 2024, Google dismissed 28 employees who participated in protests against the company's involvement in Project Nimbus, a $1.2 billion contract with the Israeli government to provide cloud computing and AI infrastructure, which the employees argued should not be used for military or intelligence services. The protesting employees, part of the group No Tech For Apartheid, staged sit-ins at Google's offices in New York and Sunnyvale, California,[381] leading to disruptions and blockages within the company facilities.[382][383] This had followed reports of Israeli forces killing large numbers of Palestinian civilians while using own Lavender AI system to identify targets.[384][385]

Antitrust, privacy, and other litigation

Fines and lawsuits

The European Commission, which imposed three fines on Google in 2017, 2018, and 2019

European Union

On June 27, 2017, the company received a record fine of €2.42 billion from the European Union for "promoting its own shopping comparison service at the top of search results."[386]

On July 18, 2018,[387] the European Commission fined Google €4.34 billion for breaching EU antitrust rules. The abuse of dominants position has been referred to as Google's constraint applied to Android device manufacturers and network operators to ensure that traffic on Android devices goes to the Google search engine. On October 9, 2018, Google confirmed[388] that it had appealed the fine to the General Court of the European Union.[389]

On October 8, 2018, a class action lawsuit was filed against Google and Alphabet due to "non-public" Google+ account data being exposed as a result of a bug that allowed app developers to gain access to the private information of users. The litigation was settled in July 2020 for $7.5 million with a payout to claimants of at least $5 each, with a maximum of $12 each.[390][391][392]

On March 20, 2019, the European Commission imposed a €1.49 billion ($1.69 billion) fine on Google for preventing rivals from being able to "compete and innovate fairly" in the online advertising market. European Union competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager said Google had violated EU antitrust rules by "imposing anti-competitive contractual restrictions on third-party websites" that required them to exclude search results from Google's rivals.[393][394]

On September 14, 2022, Google lost the appeal of a €4.125 billion (£3.5 billion) fine, which was ruled to be paid after it was proved by the European Commission that Google forced Android phone-makers to carry Google's search and web browser apps. Since the initial accusations, Google has changed its policy.[395]

On September 10, 2024, Europe's top court imposed a €2.4 billion fine on Google for abusing its dominance in the shopping comparison market, marking the conclusion of a case that began in 2009 with a complaint from British firm Foundem.[396]

On September 18, 2024, Alphabet's Google won a €1.49 billion ($1.7 billion) antitrust fine from the European Union, while Qualcomm's efforts to repeal a penalty were unsuccessful. The General Court agreed with many of the European Commission's findings but annulled the Google fine, stating that the Commission failed to consider all relevant factors and did not demonstrate harm to innovation or consumers. Google noted that it had already changed its contract practices in 2016. Meanwhile, Qualcomm saw its fine reduced slightly but failed to overturn the ruling regarding its predatory pricing against Icera. Both companies have options to appeal further.[397]

France

On January 21, 2019, French data regulator CNIL imposed a record €50 million fine on Google for breaching the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation. The judgment claimed Google had failed to sufficiently inform users of its methods for collecting data to personalize advertising. Google issued a statement saying it was "deeply committed" to transparency and was "studying the decision" before determining its response.[398]

On January 6, 2022, France's data privacy regulatory body CNIL fined Alphabet's Google 150 million euros (US$169 million) for not allowing its Internet users an easy refusal of Cookies along with Facebook.[399]

On March 20, 2024, Google was fined approximately $270 million by French regulators for using content from news outlets in France without proper disclosure to train its AI, Bard, now renamed Gemini, violating a previous commitment to negotiate content use transparently and fairly.[400]

United States

After U.S. Congressional hearings in July 2020,[401] and a report from the U.S. House of Representatives' Antitrust Subcommittee released in early October,[402] the United States Department of Justice filed an antitrust lawsuit against Google on October 20, 2020, asserting that it has illegally maintained its monopoly position in web search and search advertising.[403][404] The lawsuit alleged that Google engaged in anticompetitive behavior by paying Apple between $8 billion and $12 billion to be the default search engine on iPhones.[405] Later that month, both Facebook and Alphabet agreed to "cooperate and assist one another" in the face of investigation into their online advertising practices.[406][407] Another suit was brought against Google in 2023 for illegally monopolizing the advertising technology market.[408] In August 2024, District of Columbia U.S. District Court Judge Amit Mehta ruled that Google held a monopoly in online search and text advertising in violation of Section 2 of the Sherman Antitrust Act.[409][410]

On October 8, 2024, The U.S. government suggested it could request Google to divest parts of its business, such as the Chrome browser and Android, due to its alleged monopoly in online search. The Justice Department aimed to limit Google's growing dominance in areas like AI. Google, which intended to appeal, argued that the proposals were too extreme, while also dealing with other antitrust cases involving its app store and advertising operations.[411]

In November 2024, the Justice Department proposed major changes to curb Google's online search monopoly, including forcing the company to sell its Chrome browser, share search data with competitors, and end exclusive agreements that make Google the default search engine on devices like iPhones. The DoJ also sought a ban on Google re-entering the browser market for five years and restrictions on its investments in rival search or AI technologies. Google called these proposals excessive and harmful to consumers, pledging to appeal. A trial on the case was scheduled for April 2025, though the incoming administration and new DoJ leadership could potentially alter the course of the proceedings.[412]

Russia

On October 31, 2024, the Russian government imposed a "symbolic" fine of $20 decillion on Google for blocking pro-Russian YouTube channels. In 2022, during the invasion of Ukraine, a Russian court had ordered Google to restore the channels, with penalties doubling every week according to TASS.[413] This comes alongside other large fines against social media companies accused of hosting content critical of the Kremlin or supportive of Ukraine.[414]

Geolocation

Google has been criticized for continuing to collect location data from users who had turned off location-sharing settings.[415] In 2020, the FBI used a geofence warrant to request data from Google about Android devices near the Seattle Police Officers Guild building following an arson attempt during Black Lives Matter protests. Google provided anonymized location data from devices in the area, which raised privacy concerns due to the potential inclusion of unrelated protesters.[416]

Private browsing lawsuit

In early June 2020, a $5 billion class-action lawsuit was filed against Google by a group of consumers, alleging that Chrome's Incognito browsing mode still collects their user history.[417][418] The lawsuit became known in March 2021 when a federal judge denied Google's request to dismiss the case, ruling that they must face the group's charges.[419][420] Reuters reported that the lawsuit alleged that Google's CEO Sundar Pichai sought to keep the users unaware of this issue.[421]

In April 2024, it was announced that Google agreed to settle this lawsuit. Under the terms of the settlement Google agreed to destroy billions of data records to settle a lawsuit claiming it secretly tracked the internet use of people who thought they were browsing privately.[422]

Gender discrimination lawsuit

In 2017, three women sued Google, accusing the company of violating California's Equal Pay Act by underpaying its female employees. The lawsuit cited the wage gap was around $17,000 and that Google locked women into lower career tracks, leading to smaller salaries and bonuses. In June 2022, Google agreed to pay a $118 million settlement to 15,550 female employees working in California since 2013. As a part of the settlement, Google also agreed to hire a third party to analyze its hiring and compensation practices.[423][424][425]

U.S. government contracts

Following media reports about PRISM, the NSA's massive electronic surveillance program, in June 2013, several technology companies were identified as participants, including Google.[426] According to unnamed sources, Google joined the PRISM program in 2009, as YouTube in 2010.[427]

Google has worked with the United States Department of Defense on drone software through the 2017 Project Maven that could be used to improve the accuracy of drone strikes.[428] In April 2018, thousands of Google employees, including senior engineers, signed a letter urging Google CEO Sundar Pichai to end this controversial contract with the Pentagon.[429] Google ultimately decided not to renew this DoD contract, which was set to expire in 2019.[430]

In 2022 Google shared a $9 billion contract from the Pentagon for cloud computing with Amazon, Microsoft, and Oracle.[431]

See also

- Outline of Google
- History of Google
- Criticism of Google
- List of Google products
- Google China
- Google logo
- Googlization
- Google.org
- Google ATAP
- List of mergers and acquisitions by Alphabet
- Surveillance Capitalism

Notes

a. Google was incorporated on September 4, 1998, however, since 2002, the company has celebrated its anniversaries on various days in September, most frequently on September 27.[1][2][3] The shift in dates reportedly happened to celebrate index-size milestones in tandem with the birthday.[4]

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External links

- Official website (https://about.google/)
- Official blog (https://blog.google/)
- Business data for Google, Inc.: Reuters (https://www.reuters.com/markets/companies/GOOG.OQ) · SEC filings (https://www.sec.gov/cgi-bin/browse-edgar?action=getcompany&CIK=1288776)

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